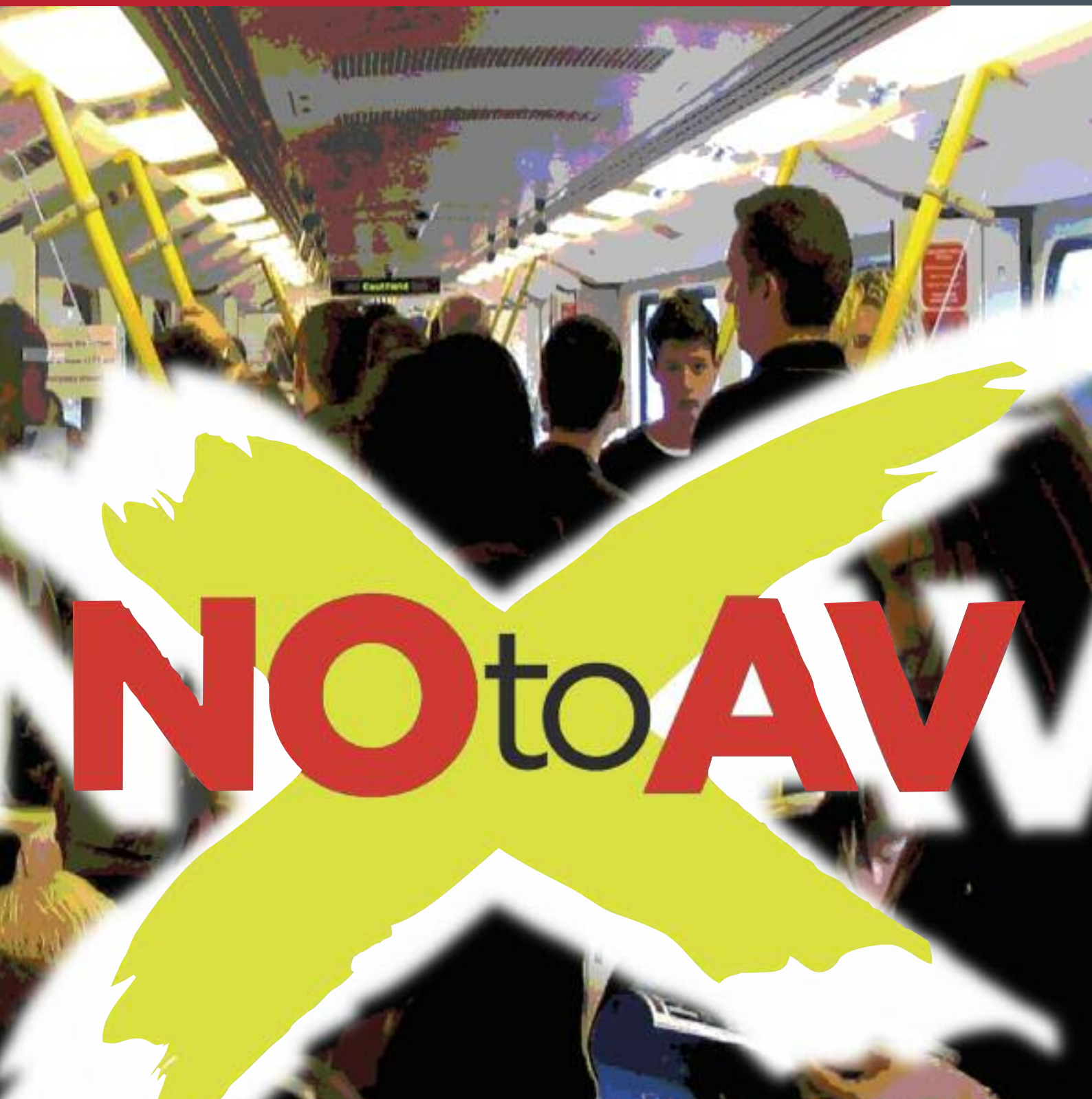




ASLEF

PUBLISHED BY THE ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN

JOURNAL
MARCH 2011



9 **Driverless Tubes:** Union bashing in disguise

6 **Crossings:** Joined-up approach in East Midlands

More than just a **union**

saver plan

for the cost of a brad
or angelina film you can
look after your future...

tax free policies from £5 per week

for further information call us
on **freephone 0800 328 9140**

visit our website at
www.engineomens.co.uk

or write to us at Railway Enginemen's Assurance Society Limited,
727 Washwood Heath Road, Birmingham, B8 2LE



railway enginemen's
assurance society

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority
Incorporated under the Friendly Societies Act 1992





There are no accidents at level crossings

ONE of the most touching and tragic images of level crossing incidents is surely that of teenage victims Olivia Bazlinton and Charlotte Thompson. These young girls died when they ran over the line in front of a train at Elsenham in Essex in December 2005. An inquest jury returned a verdict of 'accidental death'. That decision is now being challenged - and I am delighted that it is.

The word 'accident' seems to have lost its meaning when it is applied to level crossing deaths. To be an accident, an event has to be unexpected, and have no deliberate cause. In which case I'd say there is no such thing as a level crossing 'accident'. Why? Because we do expect them: they happen all the time. And they are caused, sometimes because obvious precautions have not been taken - such as the simple concept of interlocking. At its most basic this means gates won't open when the train signal is green. If this had been in place at Elsenham, those two lives would have been saved.

The two girls saw the train they wanted to catch in the station and, their eyes and minds focussed on it, they opened the gate and ran over the line towards it. That is why they died. If the gates had been locked it is unlikely they would have climbed over.

But what happened at Elsenham was even worse because three years before the incident Network Rail staff had assessed the crossing and specifically recommended that a set of barriers to the pedestrian crossing should be locked automatically when trains were approaching. For whatever reason, that was ignored. Even worse, the recommendation was then hidden from the enquiry team ruling on the cause of the incident. It was only discovered thanks to the tenacity of Olivia's father Chris Bazlinton. He says it is a 'cover up', an allegation I hope the review will examine. But while risk assessments are ignored and forgotten, it can't ever be called an 'accident'.

Keith Norman
General Secretary



12



5

News

4

- Row over Channel Tunnel safety threatens Frankfurt service 4
- RSSB report shows SPAD increases in 2010 5
- Level crossings: EMT stop passing the parcel 6



19

Features

8

- Standards fall as the media makes (up) the news 8
- Tube Drivers are skilled, professional - and necessary 9
- Don't distract drivers - let them drive 11
- Alternative Vote is no reform: say No on 5 May 12-13
- Driver Parker's charity leads to MBE 14
- ASLEF challenges all white Scots Parliament 22



7

Regulars

9

- Keeping Track 15
- Obituaries 17
- Branch News 18
- Letters 20
- Prize Crossword/Legal services for members 23



15

ABOUT ASLEF

Aslef Journal published monthly by ASLEF

✉ 9 Arkwright Road London NW3 6AB ☎ 020 7317 8600

📠 020 7794 6406 📧 journal@aslef.org.uk 🌐 www.aslef.org.uk

ASLEF JOURNAL | EDITOR Keith Norman | PRINTED BY TU ink, London EC2A 4QS | GRAPHIC DESIGN Michael Cronin
ADVERTISING Ten Alps Media, 1 New Oxford Street, High Holborn, London, W.C1A. 1N.U. | **ADVERTISING CONTACTS** Contact
 matthew.reilly@tenalps.com Tel: 020 7878 2361 (display) or joe.brooks@tenalps.com Tel: 020 7657 1801 (classified)

MEMBER SMALL ADS Contact sfrancis@aslef.org.uk or call Sarah at headquarters. The acceptance of an advert does not necessarily imply endorsement of that product or service by ASLEF. **CHANGE OF ADDRESS** Please post your details to ASLEF, 9 Arkwright Rd, NW3 6AB.

**More than
just a union**



No, your eyes are not deceiving you! This picture shows a length of track in New Zealand after last year's earthquake

Row over Channel Tunnel safety threatens Frankfurt service

THE direct train from London St Pancras to Frankfurt planned for 2013 is threatened by a safety row.

The French engineering group Alstom has questioned the safety of the Siemens ICE high speed train operated by German rail firm Deutsche Bahn. The service, which made an exploratory run to London last autumn, is expected to carry up to a million passengers a year.

The dispute is rooted in the

decision by Eurostar, the French-controlled cross-Channel operator, to buy new trains manufactured by German engineering group Siemens, shunning a rival bid from French group Alstom. The French government has backed Alstom's argument that the Siemens trains breach safety guidelines because their motors are concealed under carriages and distributed along the train.

CICA – PUTTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

KEITH NORMAN would like to point out that Driver Anthony Dobson wasn't quite right when, in his letter last month about fatality compensation, he said a driver needs to be off the footplate for a minimum of six weeks before it is possible to claim criminal compensation.

The details are in the ASLEF diary but in essence you don't need to be off work for six weeks, but you need to demonstrate suffering from 'disabling, but temporary mental anxiety, lasting more than six weeks which is medically verified'.

TORIES FIRST LOST VOTE IS OVER TIME CHANGE

DESPITE opposition from the government in the form of Business Minister Ed Davey, MP's last month gave their initial approval to the Daylight Saving Bill. It requires the government to conduct analysis of the costs and benefits of shifting the clocks forward by an hour for all or part of the year. If it is found to benefit the UK, a three-year trial will follow.

The government had argued that the 'necessary consensus across all parts of the UK does not yet exist to justify a change' but Conservative Rebecca Harris said her Bill could save up to 80 lives a year, and supporters argued that lighter evenings would reduce traffic fatalities. Critics, including the Scottish Nationalists, insisted a later sunrise would make the school run more dangerous and present problems for farmers and outdoor workers, particularly in Scotland.

Newsinbrief

○ SCRAPPING CAPITAL RAIL FREIGHT GRANTS 'COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE'

Freight on Rail, to which ASLEF is affiliated, has called on the government to reconsider its decision to scrap capital rail freight grants. Philippa Edmunds said, 'Transport is the only sector with increasing emissions, so we urge the Coalition to reconsider this short-sighted decision which goes against its own policy [1] to reduce carbon dioxide [2] road congestion [3] improve road safety [4] and promote green transport.' She added that, 'Capital grants for equipment at terminals helped offset the initial start up costs of the transfer to rail. Without these grants, it will be harder to get long distance traffic off our congested road network.'

○ PLYMOUTH WEEKEND FORUM DISTRICT 6 AND 7

There will be an ASLEF weekend forum in Plymouth over the weekend of 25-27 March, to be held in the New Continental Hotel in the city's Milbay Road at a reduced group rate of £110. Breakfast will be provided on the 26-27 and dinner on the evening of 26 March. For further information or to book, please contact Mick Whelan (mwhelan@aslef.org.uk) or Stan Moran (smoran@aslef.org.uk)

○ WELSH LANGUAGE COMPLAINT

Councillors at Pwllheli Town Council have criticised the Cambrian Line for using English-only announcements on their service, claiming that on numerous journeys in the past weeks and months, the announcements of the next stop on trains and on the town's platform were in English only. The council described it as 'very disappointing' in an area noted for its desire to promote and preserve the Welsh language.



Lorraine Phelan – now MBE

○ MBE FOR MICK WHELAN'S WIFE

Lorraine Phelan, who is married to District 6 Organiser Mick Whelan, is to receive an MBE for her union work and for her services to St Mary's Hospital in Paddington where she has worked for 36 years. Lorraine is the chief biomedical scientist of special haematology and is responsible for setting up the haemoglobinopathies services which examines red blood cells for disease. Colleagues at the hospital say her mantra is, 'When the going gets tough, the tough keep talking'. So we can see why she and Mick get on so well!



FOOTBALLER FORGETS HIS PORSCHE AT TRAIN STATION

Real Zaragoza had to get in touch with former player Jermaine Pennant last month to tell the Stoke winger he had left a Porsche at the town's train station for the previous five months. When he was contacted about the car, he admitted he'd forgotten about it. It could happen to any of us. Couldn't it?

RSSB report shows SPAD increases in 2010

The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) overview of safety performance for 2010 shows that the number of Signals Passed at Danger (SPADs) increased. On the other hand, for the third year running, there were no passenger or workforce fatalities in train accidents.

The headlines for 2010 were

- At 306, the number of category 'A' SPADs for 2010 was higher than the 261 occurring in 2009. The level of SPAD risk stood at 76% of the September 2006 baseline, compared with 63% at the end of 2009

- For the third year in succession, there were no passenger or workforce fatalities in train accidents.

- Nine passengers died in separate incidents. All occurred in stations. This is the highest number since 2004.

- At 26, the number of potentially higher-risk train accidents was the lowest recorded; and compares with 42 for 2009.

- Three members of the workforce were fatally injured, compared with one in 2009.

- At six, the total number of fatalities occurring to members of the public, and not involving trespass or suicide, was the lowest for more than 10 years. Four of the fatalities occurred at level crossings, compared with 13 for 2009.

- Fatalities arising from trespass and suicide totalled 258 in 2010, compared to 266



in 2009.

■ The RSSB are running an on-line survey to assist in a four-year project to transform the industry Rule Book. The aim is to make the Rule Book easier for front line staff to use.

They say, 'If you work at the front line and use Module G1 or any of Handbooks 1-5, we would like to hear your views.'

The documents were introduced in June 2010 and this is an opportunity to say what you think about the

changes after using them for some months. In particular, are they an improvement on previous modules and how easy are they to use on the job.

All information you provide is confidential and will be combined with other front line staff so individual comments will not be individually identifiable.

The web link for the questionnaire is www.surveymonkey.com/s/rulebook_feedback and comments are welcome from 21 February until 8 April.

DISUSED LONDON TUBE STATIONS TO BE CONFERENCE CENTRES?



There are plans to open 26 disused tube stations and tunnels as conference centres and tourist attractions. The Old London Underground Company says it hopes to transform derelict tunnels, shelters and stations. Included in the plans are Aldwych which closed in 1994, the deep BT Holborn complex built in the 40s as an air-aid shelter and a site outside Stockwell station.



NORWAY COMPENSATION FOR DRIVING 66s!

While ASLEF complains that 66s are unfit and unsafe, citing a lack of air conditioning, poor seating and noise levels, a novel 'solution' has been advanced by CargoNet in Norway. They reacted to complaints about their CD66 variant of the Class 66 by agreeing to paying higher pay rates for driving them.

DRS WINS LUXURY BOAT TRAIN CONTRACT

Direct Rail Services has secured a contract to run trains from Glasgow Central and Edinburgh Waverley to transport passengers to meet luxury Cunard, P&O and Princess Cruises liners from Southampton.

The first train of the 2011 season will depart from Edinburgh Waverley on the 19 April calling at Newcastle, Leeds and Solihull. Glasgow services will call at Preston and Manchester (Stockport).

TORIES GET INTO SWING OVER UNIONS

Chancellor George Osborne last month labelled opposition within trade unions as 'the forces of stagnation'. He claimed union opposition was 'a key factor' in holding back the UK's economic recovery and re-iterated the possibility of introducing laws to prevent unions from taking industrial action.

Rejecting calls for a change of course on spending cuts after a meeting with the TUC, the chancellor attacked union critics of the government's spending cuts. 'I regard these people as the forces of stagnation, when we are trying to get the British economy competitive again, moving forward again,' he said. 'We are prepared to consider changes to the law around strikes as a last resort,' he told the BBC.

MEGA TRUCKS STILL LOITERING

The coalition government looks poised to allow an increase in the length of lorries (HGVs) of up to almost 7 feet (2.05 metres).

Philippa Edmunds of Freight on Rail says, 'This runs counter to government stated policies to reduce freight's emissions and improve road safety. It also risks ushering in mega trucks of 25 metres from Europe – which it previously said it opposed.'

Philippa says it seems a perverse decision to increase lorry lengths while the London bendy bus is being phased due to road safety concerns.

She points out that previous increases in lorry lengths led to more HGVs driving around with less cargo. 'One in four lorries on our roads are empty and many more only partially loaded,' she adds.

ASLEF meets Coalition Transport Minister

General Secretary Keith Norman led a delegation of senior union officials to meet the Conservative Minister of State Theresa Villiers at the Department for Transport in January, reports James McGowan. A cordial exchange of views covered the Coalition Government's franchising policy review, rail freight and rolling stock manufacturing as well as the question of how a more diverse workforce could be attracted into the industry.

Level crossings: EMT stop passing the parcel

General Secretary Keith Norman always complains that every level crossing incident is followed by a 'pass the parcel of blame' as train operating companies (TOCs), the British Transport Police (BTP), Network Rail (NR) and Uncle Tom Cobley vie to accuse someone else of a failure. That's why it was heartening to meet people from East Midlands Trains (EMT) last month – and discover that they are pioneers of a 'joined up' approach to the problem ...

DRIVER Darren Sims was out with a trainee a couple of years ago on the Worksoop service when a double decker bus suddenly appeared on a crossing in front of the train. It turned out to be a school bus carrying children to a swimming lesson. 'We managed to avert a major tragedy,' he says. 'But I vowed then that I'd do everything I could to make crossings safer. Happily I was soon given the chance.'

East Midlands Trains had concluded that the only way to tackle level crossing safety was to involve everyone in the industry - and had set in motion a mechanism to bring everyone together.

EMT strategic planner Darren Ward explains, 'We know Network Rail are formally responsible for level crossings: but to assess risk accurately they need up-to-date information, which includes real life experiences from front-line staff – especially drivers. The involvement of the BTP is also crucial. They can only apply enforcement if they have accurate reports of abuse to work from. We have had meetings with all interested parties – including the regulator - and the results have been very encouraging.'

SAFETY AWARENESS DAYS

One of the initiatives has seen front line staff such as Darren Sims, other EMT staff, BTP and Network Rail pitching up at regularly misused level crossings with high-visibility vests and large signs asking 'Would it kill you to wait?'

'We approach drivers when we have a captive audience as they wait, handing out leaflets and chatting about incidents that have happened locally. They all have their own stories about people jumping the lights,' Darren says. 'The responses are invariably positive. Car drivers see the sense in what we say – they just don't always act on it.'

In fact, some drivers have even speeded up to avoid waiting during the Open Day events! 'Often it is because road users are in a hurry but in some cases it's down to sheer ignorance. We're currently lobbying to have level crossing added as a compulsory part of the car driving theory test,' Richard Pedley, from NR, adds.

The EMT and NR teams have also spoken to pedestrians, local businesses, builders and importantly, schools. They have left materials that can be used by teachers and given out at assemblies. It is more difficult to go into schools with the need for police clearance, but, working with the BTP, they have developed interactive recourses which are sent to hotspot locations – where young people have been misusing the railway. .

When EMT and Network Rail took up the banner they were aware that not all TOCs

supported similar initiatives with front line staff – but they believe it is important to do so. 'The local TOC can make the message much more immediate and direct. Local drivers can talk about their experiences on a particular line, and we can explain why barriers are down for so long in a particular location.'

INVOLVING EVERYONE

The company has also sponsored messroom meetings to discuss the challenge and pick up other ideas. 'The two we've held at Nottingham and the one at Lincoln have been very useful,' Darren says.

They always stress the need for drivers to report open gates at user worked crossings (UWC) – and are tackling reasons they don't always do so.

Why don't drivers report problems with crossings? 'Most say, 'What's the point?' They think it's a waste of time. 'It's always been like that.' 'The signallers don't always pass it on', 'It'll only be open again by the time I come back'... There's a load of reasons – but we need to change attitudes,' says Ward.

'Often drivers don't have easy access to the signaller's contact number. Or they put in a report which they know doesn't always get logged officially. They also get no feedback for their efforts. EMT has now issued a booklet to its drivers which provides details of all signal boxes on a route by route basis. In association with NR and the regulator they also plan to support a collaborative trial for the numbering



The driver of this car slipped off the crossing, got the car stuck – and left it! Proof that 100% safe crossings just aren't going to happen ...



Driver Mick Holland speaks to a 'captive' car drivers at one of the 'Don't run the risk' events



Driver Darren Sims (centre) was named Stagecoach Safety Champion at a ceremony last year



The message in the messroom: information from drivers is essential to assessing risk

of crossings and improved reporting processes on a specific route. They hope to create a model that could be rolled out elsewhere if it's successful.

IDENTIFYING RISKS

There are over 800 crossings of every variety on EMT lines. The UWCs probably cause most problems, as they are used by a wide range of people, ranging from farmers and land owners, to delivery people and fisherman on their way to remote lakes.

One of NR's challenges is to assess the risk of each so that appropriate steps can be taken. 'Our major problem there is to get accurate information from the drivers. Without accurate information, systems like ALCRM may not capture the true extent of risk at a given location. This is important in order to consider suitable mitigation.'

ALCRM (all level crossing risk assessment model) is a computer programme that assesses all risk factors – like type of crossing, speed of trains, geography or area, schools in vicinity – and gives it a score. From this, decisions are made about providing extra working lights, automated gates, or even enforcement cameras.

'The new camera vans currently being trialled are a good example of everyone working together,' Richard explains. 'Network Rail provides them, BTP staffs them and they are deployed in areas selected from information we get from front line staff. Cars that run the lights are caught in the same manner as a car triggering a speed camera, then it's over to the courts to issue the penalty.'

One problem is that the courts seem to have inconsistent standards for dealing with level crossing offences. 'For more or less the same breach of the law, the penalty can vary from a £60 fine and a few points on your licence, to a couple of months in jail.'

DOING WHAT WE CAN

There will never be a complete end to level crossing fatalities – but there is a lot that can be done to help limit it. The provision of bridges or tunnels over all the 7,500 is not an option at up to a million pounds or more each – and even closing a crossing can bring problems with local councils.

But certainly closer cooperation – destroyed by privatisation – is a positive



Drivers Mick Holland and Darren Sims along with people from EMT, NR and the BTP

forward step. ASLEF hopes we'll see the EMT efforts replicated in other companies. EMT has made great strides and we applaud those efforts. One problem that remains is that they can't measure the lives their efforts have saved or will save: only the ones they haven't.

In some ways it is a thankless task: which is what makes their efforts even more to be applauded. As Darren Sims says, 'By working together, we can make a difference.'

Opinion

How flexible should work be?

asks **Ken Goldsmith**, a local rep at Marylebone

THANKS to Nigel Gibson for raising the debate about flexible working in the November Journal. As a local rep I feel passionately that managers must treat my colleagues in an appropriate and fair manner.

But equally I feel that normally there should be no disparity in pay or conditions between employees doing the same job in the same workplace. The principle of rostered working is to ensure that everyone takes a turn at working unsociable late, night and weekend duties.

As a local rep I have fully supported drivers with a genuine need to be accommodated, and assisted in implementing a job share arrangement at my depot.

REASON NEEDS TO BE MAJOR

Management's stance in the job share case that Nigel mentioned in his article was plainly absurd. However that case doesn't justify flexible working, even less extending it.

Bluntly, to opt out of a rostered shift, an employee needs to be suffering hardship in their personal life that makes working such shifts impossible.

MY PROBLEM WITH FLEXIBILITY

My main problem with the flexible working

legislation is that it gives any employee with a child under six years the right to request hours that suit them, simply to spend 'quality time' with their children – even if they are in a two-partner relationship. This will naturally be at weekends and in the evenings.

As a parent I am fully aware of the stresses and strains of bringing up children. The reason I am against 'flexible working' is because I feel it is unfair on colleagues without children.

PAY PARITY

And what about pay parity? Enhancements for working unsociable hours now tend to be included in basic pay. So is it right that someone on flexible working enjoys the same salary as a colleague who still works lates, nights and weekends?

I know some rogue employers made this legislation necessary, but it should only be used in exceptional cases. And I don't think the law considered a shift environment. All the 'case histories' cite shop or office workers who are allowed to vary their hours a little – with little impact on their colleagues.

Flexible working allows a section of the workforce to enjoy better working conditions, on the same salary, than their colleagues. It creates a two-tier effect to which I am fundamentally opposed.

Standards fall as the n makes (up) the news



by **Gregor Gall, Research Professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Hertfordshire**

I READ Keith Norman's column in last month's Journal with interest. He was quite right when he said that 'Royal wedding to be hit by tube strike' was the biggest non-story in quite a long while. You can either see it as an outright lie or bending the truth so much that the truth breaks. Either way, it amounts to pretty much the same thing: and that is the government and right-wing media having an almighty and poisonous pop at the unions, ably assisted – it has to be said by – Ed Miliband.

The announcement late last year that Prince William and Kate Middleton will marry on 29 April was greeted by the media in a way that suggested that we, the ordinary folk who are mere subjects, would be glad of a royal wedding to make us forget about the doom and gloom of a continuing recession and swingeing cuts in public services.

It was almost as if the media was saying that this royal wedding has the power through its pomp and magic to unite us together just like the Blitz spirit was supposed to have amongst the devastation of the Second World War. This was music to the ears of Cameron and Clegg who, when announcing their cuts

programme, frequently parroted the line, 'We're all in this together'.

But when you look at the way this story emerged, it tells you an awful lot about the way the media and politics work to preserve the influence of the rich and powerful.

HALF TRUTHS BECOMING FACTS

I have it on good authority that the conversation that set off this media feeding frenzy went something along these lines.

An ASLEF representative was contacted by a journalist from the Evening Standard. The hack asked whether the dispute with London Underground – with the company insisting that working on a Bank Holiday was no different to normal working day – had been resolved. The answer was no – as the strike last Boxing Day 2010 testified.

Then the journalist asked if ASLEF members would take strike action on the next Bank Holiday if the dispute still was not resolved. The reply was a 'very probably' given the nine-to-one mandate in an industrial action ballot to take action. So, the journalist asked casually, does that mean that the Bank (or Public) holiday for April 29 might witness a strike?

Given that the 29 April was four months away, the ASLEF rep said he'd rule nothing in or out. In fact the exact words, as recorded by the journalist, were, 'We have already warned of further strike action on bank holidays and one of those options is 29 April'.

This was enough for London's Evening Standard. This innocuous and vague conversation was sufficient to light the blue touch paper which would blaze a headline over the front page saying there would be a strike: 'Royal wedding threat: Tube strike to hit Kate and Wills' big day'.

MUCK SPREADS

In a telling example of how the media regurgitates its own stories, even sometimes when it doubts that they are true, countless other newspapers took up the cudgel against ASLEF and its London Underground members. The only saving grace amongst the standard bearers of reaction was that the Times said there 'could' be a strike while the Telegraph said ASLEF was 'threatening' a strike. Not exactly the truth – but certainly a bit closer to it than the Evening Standard was prepared to admit.

As soon as the cat was out of the bag, Boris Johnson and David Cameron laid the boot in. The strike was irresponsible, wicked and dastardly and so on and so on ... A few days, later the not-so 'Red Ed' Miliband repeated these blasphemies.

Boris and the union: For the record

IN THE aftermath of the Great Non-Existent Strike story, a follow up in the Evening Standard bellowed 'Union bosses snub Boris Johnson by turning down his offer of talks on the future of the Tube'. It claimed that Keith Norman had refused to 'discuss strategic issues such as transport funding and the Olympics'.

In fact, Keith responded to the mayor's offer of a meeting by pointing out that 'ASLEF is currently in very constructive dialogue with the management of LUL over the bank holiday dispute' and saying that he saw 'no point in a meeting while the negotiations are on-going'.

All of which is perfectly reasonable in industrial relations terms. You go up a level if you can't get an agreement – not if you are progressing an issue.

It's the reverse of what happened last year when we asked Boris for a meeting and he turned it down because we were in an industrial dispute with LUL at the time. We didn't see this as a 'snub'. We might have thought it was daft, but that's another matter. But when we respond in almost exactly the same way to the mayor, his press office briefed the media that there had been a 'snub'.

Does this make them stupid or mischievous? Or shall we settle on 'both'?



media



Kate Middleton on the sharp end of a press photographer's lens

It did not matter one iota that as soon as the Evening Standard came out on the 10 January, ASLEF issued a rebuttal saying that 'the question of possible industrial action on the day of the Royal Wedding has not even been discussed by the union's executive ... the story is premature to say the least'. Neither did it matter that this statement was repeated on many other subsequent occasions.

As they say, 'why let the truth get in the way of a good story?'

ATTACK STRIKERS AND MUTE PROTEST

As far as I'm concerned, the important thing is that it is up to the members and their union to decide whether to strike on 29 April if there is still a dispute – and not Cameron or Clegg or anyone else. It's also the case that a strike that has no impact is not really worth having. Otherwise you have no bargaining leverage.

But what's more apparent than any of these considerations is that the government, in alliance with the media, is trying to delegitimise strike action at the very time that union members are beginning to contemplate strikes as a way to resist the massive attacks on jobs and services in the public sector.

Coincidence? Surely not. And, that's because we're not 'all in it together'. The government and media want ordinary folk to pay the cost of the bailout of the banks and business – and not the banks and businesses themselves, because they are their friends. Friends don't do that to each, do they?

And incidentally, anyone thinking the unions have friends in the media is deluding themselves.



Tube Drivers are skilled, professional – and necessary

Last month we reported that Boris Johnson had raised the possibility of London having driverless Tube trains. Here Finn Brennan, of the union's London Functional Council, explains why the Mayor, not for the first time, has got it utterly wrong ...

A politician in search of a headline is rarely an edifying sight, but most at least make an attempt to ensure their claims have some basis in fact. An exception seems to be London's Tory Mayor Boris Johnson.

His attack on ASLEF over an imaginary threat to strike on young William Windsor's wedding day was merely laughable; but his claim that 'practically anyone' could drive a tube train with a couple of weeks training was a calculated insult to our members.

He referred to the Jubilee line, where our drivers are among the most skilled on the entire rail network. They are trained to operate using in-cab signalling, conventional colour light signalling and in ATO mode. Northern line drivers will

soon do the same. Across London Underground (LUL)'s subsurface lines drivers are now being trained on 'S' stock which is similar to London Overground (LOROL)'s Class 378. Bakerloo and District line drivers work over both LUL and network rail infrastructure - and are trained on both sets of rules. The Central and Victoria lines have used different forms of Automatic Train Operation (ATO) for years (decades in the case of the Vic) but the women and men who operate those trains are still highly skilled people dealing with the same problems and defects as every other train driver.

I suspect that every person in the room full of bankers and business people that Mr Johnson was

addressing at the Mansion House dinner (except of course the waiters) earns more in a month than a train driver does in a year. And they probably pay less tax on it. But how many could really take the responsibility for other people's lives and safety – which our members do every day?

Johnson's motive was good old-fashioned union bashing. He and his class will never cease to resent the fact that working people organise collectively to try and achieve a reasonable standard of living. Let's hope that he will no longer have any part in dealing with transport issues after the Mayoral election in 2012. No doubt he will return to his role of TV funny man. Underground drivers, and ASLEF the trade union that represents us, will be here for many decades to come.

Insults we can simply ignore; but if there is any attempt to undermine the conditions of service of our members on any part of the Underground then this Tory led government will learn something about how trade unions can defend working people.

ASLEF TRAVEL CLUB Special Travel Offers

Holland Bulbfields Cruise



4 days from **£269**

Admire field upon field of bulbfields, visit the world famous Keukenhof Gardens, the windmills of Kinderdijk and the Golden Age town of Dordrecht. Also spend time in Dazzling Amsterdam. Our Holland Cruise and Best of the Bulbfields holiday is not to be missed!

Includes: ● Transfers and entrance fees to Keukenhof Gardens ● Morning Cruise through Rotterdam Harbour ● Afternoon Cruise past Kinderdijk ● Three nights accommodation in a Grade 1 twin bedded cabin ● Welcome drink, party night and Captain's Dinner ● Full Board on board the MS Arlene ● Complimentary tea/coffee ● On board entertainer ● Return ferry/ Eurotunnel crossings ● Local pick up points or fly from your local airport ● Full Services of a Phoenix Holidays Cruise Manager on board MS Arlene

Departs Throughout April 2011

BROCHURE HOTLINE: 01789 261 112

Order Your **FREE** brochure now and look forward to the holiday of a lifetime

Name:
Address:
.....
Postcode:

ASLEF TRAVEL CLUB
ABTA
ABTA No. C9118

Return address:
ASLEF Travel Club
Packwood House,
Guild Street,
Stratford-upon-Avon
CV37 6RP

Save up to 30%
on AA Membership
at enrolment and 10% at renewal*



*Terms and Conditions apply

To join, call
0800 048 0075
Quoting reference 'Aslef 751'

AA For the road ahead

MARCH FOR THE ALTERNATIVE: JOBS • GROWTH • JUSTICE

SAY NO TO UNFAIR AND UNNECESSARY SPENDING CUTS

BACK THE ALTERNATIVE

- a Robin Hood tax on the banks
- closing tax loopholes
- policies for jobs and green growth

SATURDAY 26 MARCH 2011

Assemble at 11am on Victoria Embankment, between Temple Place and Blackfriars, to march to a rally in Hyde Park



March with **ASLEF**

The cuts will affect everyone, including railway workers and their families. Bring your banners and join your union on the march.

To arrange transport for banners call National Organiser Simon Weller on 07939 173 042 or email sweller@aslef.org.uk

more details at
www.tuc.org.uk/march
join the campaign at
www.falseeconomy.org.uk



The ASLEF website...

... all you need at the click of a button



www.aslef.org.uk

take part in the monthly poll
view the up to date ASLEF rule book
get up to date with the latest ASLEF news
find out the current elections taking place
add your views in the members only discussion board
read EC, district council and community news
learn about legal, financial and other issues

New feature
YOU CAN NOW LEAVE YOUR COMMENTS ON ASLEF NEWS ARTICLES!

Don't distract drivers - let them drive

urges Nick Silk of the union's Colchester branch

LIKE any responsible train driver, I would like to work in an incident-free industry, a world without SPADS, TPWS incidents, station overruns, 'fails to calls', 'stop shorts' or wrong route incidents. Unfortunately human error will always play its part - especially today when drivers travel more miles with shorter turnaround times and minimum PNB breaks. Longer turns and more miles mean more chance of driver error as we struggle to maintain concentration levels.

Everybody claims to be concerned - the RSSB, Red Alert and Ciras, not to mention the TOCs and FOCs. They keep introducing new initiatives they say will help reduce incident rates. I believe they create more problems than they solve. The schemes are invented by people the industry calls 'railway professionals' - but the vast majority have no experience or understanding of train driving.

We are not in the business of granting 'brownie points' to managers for ideas unless they serve a purpose. If they don't, we should reject them.

LESS THEN NO HELP

Recently the 'professionals' have come up with five ideas that are supposed to increase concentration and decrease distraction

- Commentary driving
- Station name dials
- Train length indicators
- Thinking a mile out (in the July 2010 'Red Alert')
- Mobile phones and the associated policies

Yet each of these is a distraction likely to lead to a loss of concentration! They all result in train driving being taken away from the train driver. There is only one way to reduce incident rates - to ensure train drivers are trained correctly and then allowed to drive without in-cab distractions.

GET IMMOBILE

Mobile phones are not used as was intended. They should be switched off and only used in emergency situations in line with the rule

book. But companies abuse their own mobile phone policies, using them for things like rostering and contacting drivers for reports. These practices must stop. Drivers who switch their phone on when changing ends or during a PNB and find a text message or a missed call from his manager could have their concentration affected as they think about that call or text.

ASLEF, with many TOCs helped develop Competence Development Process/Drivers Competence Development - the CDP/DCD procedures. But some TOCs are using it as a paper exercise rather than as a tool to help develop drivers' competence. If a driver has concentration or distraction issues it doesn't help to give him a couple of extra downloads or unannounced rides over months and months of the agreed plan. The plan must be fit for purpose - but many managers who administer this policy look upon it as a nuisance and extra work.

ASLEF must ensure that the policy they helped to develop is used as it was intended, and that involves reps playing a part in development plans after an incident. It shouldn't be left to the driver. A rep should be involved to ensure the plan is fit for purpose. TOCs and FOCs should never be allowed to discipline or downgrade drivers without firm evidence that they have done everything possible to develop a competence.

SAFE AND PROFESSIONAL

Professional people like train drivers must be allowed to do their jobs without distraction or

having to worry about unnecessary discipline. The industry demands that we carry out our duties in a professional and safe manner. We must demand that the managers they appoint to implement their policies are themselves sufficiently professional and experienced to provide us with the tools to do the jobs we are trained for.

ASLEF must make sure that all TOCs and FOCs provide a safe environment, functioning equipment, reliable Driver Only Operated (DOO) and platforms with the correct number of staff required for safe train dispatch. All these things should already be in place. The suspicion is that they want incident reduction just so long as it costs them nothing.

The onus is always on the driver, while companies hide behind rule books, policies and procedures. For example, the rule book says if DOO drivers can't see the back of the train, they must get out of the cab to physically check all is clear before closing the doors. Companies use this to avoid employing sufficient staff or providing adequate platform equipment. If a passenger is caught in the doors, the driver becomes the villain, rather than the TOC that puts profit before safety.

LESS CLUTTER, MORE CONCENTRATION

In conclusion, I want a railway that doesn't clutter cabs - or drivers' minds - with distracting equipment disguised as 'safety guidelines'. If a driver has an incident he or she is entitled to a 'fit for purpose' development plan that is put in place to develop competence and confidence. Remember that TOCs and FOCs have a duty to provide drivers with a safe working environment and equipment. We need to ensure that the people who are paid to manage drivers are competent to do so. And finally, and most importantly we should let the driver drive the trains!

Nick Silk, Driver, Colchester



ALTERNATIVE VOTE IS NO REFORM: SAY NO ON 5 MAY

The union's executive committee is backing campaigners from all sides of the political spectrum who want to dump proposals to change the country's voting system. There will be a referendum on the issue on 5 May – and ASLEF believes it's in our members' interest to vote 'No'. 'The current voting system gives everyone one vote and leads to clear decisions,' says ASLEF general secretary Keith Norman. 'Why on earth would we want to change it for one that is more complicated, less fair, more expensive – and gives some people more votes than others?' These are some of the reasons the union argues that a move to the Alternative Vote would be a backward step...

AV IS TRIED, TESTED – AND FAILED!

The 'yes' supporters give the impression that AV is a well-known and respected electoral method. In fact only three countries in the world use AV for national elections: Fiji, Australia, and Papua New Guinea. Then, when it was introduced in Australia the vote dropped so alarmingly that they changed the law to make voting compulsory. Oh, and Fiji is on the point of abandoning the system. So that leaves Papua New Guinea.

Suffice to say, AV lacks global support!

ONE PERSON, SEVERAL VOTES

Because of the complications of the AV system, people who support fringe parties can end up having their vote counted five or six times – and potentially decide the outcome of the election – while people who backed the mainstream candidates only get one vote. So it's cheerio to the old maxim of 'one person, one vote'.

WHO CAN YOU PUT UP WITH?

Under the AV system, someone's fifth or sixth choice gets the same importance as someone



else's first preference. Surely this isn't right? There's a world of difference between positively wanting one candidate to win – and reluctantly accepting that maybe you could put up with someone way down your list.

EVEN ITS MAIN SUPPORTERS DON'T WANT IT!

The two biggest cheer-leaders of AV are the Liberal Democrats and the Electoral Reform Society. Yet before last year's General Election, Nick Clegg said AV was 'a miserable little compromise' – and the Electoral Reform Society said they did 'not regard it as suitable for the election of a representative body, e.g. a

parliament'.

We think they got it right – last year!

IT'S NOT THE WAY TO PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (PR)

Some supporters of proportional representation (where all the country's votes are added up and seats are divvied out depending on their proportion of their support) think that AV might be a step in their direction. It's not. At least that was the conclusion of the leading Liberal Democrat Roy Jenkins in 1998 when he chaired the independent Royal Commission on the subject. He said AV is 'even less proportional' than the current system. And if AV should be introduced, changes to voting systems would be off the agenda for decades.

MANIFESTLY UNPOPULAR

The Alternative Vote system did not feature in

It's ridiculously c

The Electoral Reform Society (whose subsidiary company, Electoral Reform Services, makes money by counting ballots) are in favour of AV (which leads to a lot more vote-counting!) So they would want to explain the system in as simple a way as they can. So this is as simple as it gets:

The Alternative Vote (AV) is very much like First-Past-The-Post (FPTP). Like FPTP, it is used to elect representatives for single-member constituencies, except that rather than simply marking one solitary 'X' on the ballot paper, the voter has the chance to rank

The voter thus puts a '1' by their first-preference candidate, their second-preference, and so on, until they don't like any more candidates, such as most Australian elections, electors are

If a candidate receives a majority of first-preference votes (the rest combined), then they are elected.

If no candidate gains a majority on first preference, the votes of those who finished last on the first count are redistributed. This continues until a candidate gains a majority.

If we could see real benefits in using it for national elections, we might be tempted to try it. But we can't. So it's not!

the manifesto of any party in the General Election. That means the Conservatives (who will oppose AV in the 5 May vote), Labour (who don't have an official view) and the Liberal Democrats (who have now decided it's stopped being a 'miserable little compromise'!

THE COST OF NO IMPROVEMENT

If the Alternative Vote came in, not only would there be no improvement to democracy, but it would cost more. First, the government would have to spend millions to explain this complicated system to voters in order to prevent a fall in turnout. The only way the Australians did this was by making it illegal not to vote.

And secondly, the cost of counting votes will rocket. All the extra rounds means the votes couldn't be counted by hand on election night: it would involve buying electronic counting machines that are not just costly, but are much less reliable than hand counts.

MIDDLING THROUGH

The AV system would undoubtedly lead to more hung parliaments, and therefore coalition governments (and hence the backing of Clegg and his cronies for the change). The problem for democracy is that coalitions mean that after the election, political leaders pick, choose and reject the promises they made to the public. So no one can have any confidence that a party will stick by what they have said in their manifesto if they get into government – as we have seen with the Liberal Democrats reneging on promises they made on VAT increases and university fees.

For more information about the non-partisan, cross-party 'No to AV' campaign, you can visit the website at www.no2av.org, phone them on 020 3242 0063, or email info@no2av.org

complicated!



the candidates on offer.
candidate, and can continue, if they wish, to put a '2' by
care anymore or they run out of names. In some AV
are required to rank all candidates.

the votes (more people put them as number one than all

es, then the second-preference votes of the candidate
this process is repeated until someone gets over 50 per

al elections, it might be worth struggling with these



JOANNA – FULLTIME MOTHER OF TWO AND CARER TO HER DISABLED SON FROM HARROGATE

Says: "AV just doesn't seem fair to me – why should some voters get lots of choices counted and others get just one?"



JACQUELINE FOSTER MEP – TORY MEP FROM NORTH WEST OF ENGLAND

Says: "I am voting No because I do not believe AV will make voting more proportional and will, instead, give more power to extremist and fringe parties."



JANE KENNEDY NATIONAL ORGANISER NO TO AV (LABOUR) FORMER LABOUR MP FOR LIVERPOOL WAVERTREE

Says: "AV makes elections unfair. AV breaks the principle of one person one vote, because supporters of fringe parties end up having their vote counted several times while supporters of mainstream parties only have their vote counted once. Under AV the candidate that comes in third place can end up winning. People have a right to know where their vote goes. Voters themselves should decide who the best candidate is, not the voting system."



MATTHEW ELLIOTT – CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR NO TO AV

Says: "AV is complicated and expensive. Only three countries use the complicated system - Australia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea - and Australia has compulsory voting to make sure people turn up. AV would also be expensive, requiring councils to spend more time and money on vote counting, which would increase your council tax. AV is a big change, so you need to make sure that you have read the small print before voting on 5 May."



LARA SMALLMAN – WEB CAMPAIGNER NO TO AV

Says: "I felt so strongly about this issue I applied to join the No to AV campaign team. In a time of austerity when the Lib Dems are so happy to slash public expenditure I find it galling that they are wasting time and money on an referendum people don't want and are not interested in. It won't save peoples jobs, nor help the economy so I'm voting No."

JAMES JACOBS – GRADUATE FROM NOTTINGHAM

Says: "The reason I am voting no is simple! The simplicity of the current system needs to be defended, not derided."



Driver Parker's charity leads to MBE

FIVE years ago Steve Parker pinned up a notice in the mess-room of Plymouth station. It was the start of a road that would lead to him being awarded an MBE medal for his charity work in this year's Queen's Honours list.

'You never know where life is going to lead you,' he says in his soft west-country burr, accompanied with a characteristic shy smile. 'I feel so proud – not so much for myself but for everything we've managed to achieve.'

In round terms that means a massive £107,689 raised for charities, mainly those concerned with children's cancer.

Steve is a Devon man through and through and has a great affection for his local Dartmoor. He also loves walking and has a developed sense of social conscience.

So back in 1991 he put all these things together and put up a notice asking if any rail staff would support an idea he had for a two-day sponsored walk. The idea was to set out from Okehampton and walk to Princetown via Fur Tor and Great Mis Tor. There they would stay the night, and the following day they would trek by way of Nun's Cross to Ivybridge.

'The response was brilliant,' he says. 'Twelve other rail workers joined me and that first year we raised £422.'

It was, to borrow a phrase, a first small step. In 2005 there were 120 people on a walk that

raised a staggering £15,015. Last year's 45 volunteers raised £7,200.

'I didn't set out with the intention of making it an annual event,' Steve says. 'I thought it was a one-off. But each year we found ourselves saying, 'Let's do it again!'

This year will be the twentieth time that the Dartmoor Challenge has taken place, and to mark the anniversary when they set out on 11 and 12 June, the walkers will follow the original route.

The days have long gone since it was an exclusively railway staff event, although half of those who have signed up for this year's Challenge are rail people.

'But now we get all kinds of folk,' says 54-year-old Steve. 'We've had doctors, teachers, firefighters ... all kinds. But it all began here.'

We are sitting in the rest room at Plymouth station where Steve started work as a 'runner', which involved 'labelling and other back-up tasks for the duty manager'. He was then in turn a porter, shunter, second man and finally a driver, a job he says he loves. Sadly he will soon be retiring on health grounds. He's had severe problems with his wrists, and there is concern that it could develop into Parkinson's disease.

'I'm off the footplate now for good,' he says. 'It was such a pleasure to drive through this beautiful countryside. It's where I belong.'

Steve is unquestionably a 'Devon country boy' but he spent much of his boyhood abroad. 'As you might expect in this part of the world, my family background is in the Services. My father was a Royal Marine for 22 years and when I was young I spent three years in Malta and the same in Singapore. I was too young to appreciate it properly then, which is a shame. I remember it being interesting, but it didn't do my schooling much good!'

But one childhood memory was the 'wonderful, romantic' image of steam trains, which is why he chose the railways over the Services. 'We all had to move around to get to the next stage in those days,' he remembers. 'I went to St Bleazy for my second man job, and had to move to London to get my driving post.'

He looks rather embarrassed as he says what a pleasure it was to get back to Devon after four-and-a-half years in the capital. 'No disrespect to Londoners, but it was a culture shock to me when I arrived at Selhurst. It was an experience, but – cor blimey! – everything was a rush! Everyone was in a hurry. If you stopped still, someone would trample on you! I'm happier with a rather more sedate pace.'

That is certainly what he has in Princetown, where he lives today. 'Isn't that where the charity walk stops for the night?' I enquire. Steve's smile broadens. 'That's the advantage of organising it!' he says.

The main beneficiary of the Dartmoor Challenge is CLIC Sargent, a charity that cares for children and young people with cancer, and their families. 'I haven't any particular reason for choosing it, but I thought if we can help – let's go for it.'

So how did he find the extra people who now take up the Challenge? 'They came to us,' Steve says. 'We have rail people who come from London, Bournemouth, Brighton, Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol but we've been joined by others who are either keen walkers or have heard of it through the charity or in the press. If any Journal readers are interested in this year's walk, I'd be delighted to welcome them. All you need to do is contact the Challenge secretary, Mrs Compton on 07528 329 372.'

'You don't have to be a regular walker to do it. You just need appropriate clothes and boots. We give everyone a list if they contact us. We've only had two people who've pulled up, and we've had to 'walk off'. One injured herself and the other ... well, she just gave up.'

There's a lot of administrative work in these events, but Steve says he's now got an excellent team around him. 'I couldn't do it on my own any more. There's all the registration and administration beforehand, and then we need spotters at the front and back of each group and I have to arrange for some transport just in case people need to be taken off.'

'It's a fair amount of effort. But it's worth it.'

Apart from tramping over the moors, Steve enjoys walking in north Wales, the Lakes and up in Scotland, sometimes with other people or more often on his own. 'You need to be



Steve by one of the CrossCountry trains it was 'his pleasure to drive'



Steve's 'Kernow' cap shows his affection for his native south-west

comfortable with your own company if you're a train driver,' he points out. He's also a fan of heavy metal music – like Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath – and he's had a season ticket at Old Trafford for the last couple of years. But now he's getting ready for a different kind of expedition – to pick up that MBE.

'I was told last November about the award but I wasn't allowed to say anything until it was announced in the New Year. It's a real honour and I look forward to going up there with my mum and my brother. It's a terrible shame my dad couldn't be here, but he died a couple of years ago. He once met the Queen to be presented with his regiment's colours.

'I had the original idea, but the praise for all this goes to the team of people who have made it possible. And maybe I can use the MBE to open a few more doors for the charity.

'Perhaps this article will, as well. Anyone reading this, or any branches that might be interested, can contact me care of CrossCountry at Plymouth or on the secretary's number. I'd love to hear from you!'

◉ Steve is doing a three-week 272-mile charity walk along the Pennine Way from 26 June in aid of the Royal Marine Commandos. If any member or branch would like to sponsor Steve, please get in touch with him.

Would you be prepared to be featured in future editions of this column, or know someone who would be a good subject? If you do, please let us know at the ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB or journal@aslef.org.uk



Driver Steve Parker, Leader of the Dartmoor Challenge, planning the route of the charity walk.
PHOTO James Bird

A HUNDRED YEARS OF UNION

The March 1911 Locomotive Journal included a report from the union's Organising Secretary, J. Drummond who was lost in a London pea-souper, while 'Nota Bene' explained proposals to have wireless telephones on board trains ...

ARBITER BENEFITS FROM CONCILIATION

"The following day I left for London, to attend an open meeting of our Stratford Branch, called for the purpose of dealing with that all-important question "Conciliation Boards". The secretary to Board A, and the locomotive representative on the Central Board, gave their reports,

which proved to be very interesting, especially the part where the arbitrator thought 7/6 too much for enginemen, but did not hesitate, at the close, to send in a bill for £750 for 11 days work, which has been paid out of the hard-earned coppers of the railway slave, including the locomotive-men. So far as I can learn, the railwaymen of the

country intend either ending or mending the same at the end of 1913, and with that object in view two stalwarts were nominated as candidates for Board A, and it was unanimously agreed to concentrate the voting power, with a view to the said two being returned at the head of the poll.

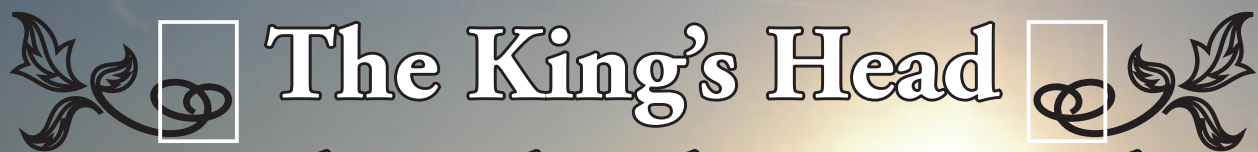
"On leaving the meeting I received what may be termed my baptism of fire in connection with a real London fog; to say you couldn't see your hand before you was no exaggeration, and the irony of it was our own members all disappeared, leaving me to my fate. All trams, 'buses, &c, had been obliged to stop running, but fortunately two of our A.S.R.S. friends stuck to me, and piloted me to the station, and I managed

to land home somehow."

WIRELESS TELEPHONES PROPOSED

"It is announced that a wireless telephone apparatus, the use of which will, it is claimed, minimize, if not entirely remove, the danger of railway collisions, has been invented by an engineer at Birmingham. The device, which is called the "Railophone", enables, it is said, messages to be sent to or from either moving or stationary trains, and, besides, establishes automatic communication between trains on the same line of rails."

◉ Extracts selected and edited by Jane Pimlott



The King's Head

www.kingsheadgower.co.uk

Visit Gower, Wales

Area of natural outstanding beauty

Stay in a quality 4 star Inn with fantastic rooms & sea views (dog friendly).

Come and play on the best courses in Wales and
sample the scenic views of Gower at the same time.

info@kingsheadgower.co.uk

01792 386212

AA

★★★★

Railway Employees' Privilege Ticket Association Working for railway people



Railway Employees' Privilege Ticket Association

Run for railway people by railway people,
REPTA helps bring the industry closer together.

REPTA members benefit from: 2011 MEMBERSHIP AVAILABLE NOW!!!

- * Over 100 years' experience
- * New for 2011 Dental Plan + Eden Project discount admission
- * Protected travel
- * Major discounts from leading high street names
- * Network support
- * Free 108 page Yearbook packed with special deals

Join today for just £2.50 and protect yourself from travel card loss charges, enjoy free insurance, save money with wide-ranging members' discounts and benefit from being in a major rail network.

Just send details of your name, address, date of birth and email together with your cheque or postal order made payable to **REPTA**.

For one membership card and yearbook including postage and packing send **£3.75**.
Each additional card for family members is **£2.50**.

Please send to: REPTA, 4 Brackmills Close, Forest Town, Mansfield, Notts NG19 0PB. Tel: 01623 646789

OR you can also now join on line @ www.repta.co.uk

MICK CLANCY EX SALTLEY AND BOURNEMOUTH

IT IS with great sadness and regret that I report the sudden tragic passing of Mick Clancy at only 51 on 22 December following a heart attack three days previously.

Mick started his railway career at Saltley in the late 1970s, later moving to Watford, Northampton and Bournemouth SWT, where he stayed until he was forced into early ill health retirement in April 2009.

He was an immensely proud ASLEF for over 30 years. He often said he was deeply saddened by 'ASLEF's capability of pushing the self destruct button' in recent years, but he never stopped believing that it was the only option for any train driver.

An active branch official and member, his greatest achievement was probably the very satisfactory deal he secured when

Northampton depot closed in the mid 1990's. He was a vehement critic of any staff reps he felt put their own interests before the members who had voted them into office, and in particular the 'traitors' (once again Mick's words) who use ASLEF as a way of getting into management and then showing total disrespect & contempt to the grade from where they came.

Mick was very proud of his children Rebecca & Dave, his life was further enhanced following the birth of his only grandchild Georgia at the start of 2010.

He was a great inspiration to all staff not just drivers, and he would always greet new entrants with application forms for ASLEF & the Railway Club along with advice on the pension fund, local agreements and their

rights, anyone could go to Mick for advice.

Football (a loyal and ardent Birmingham City fan), rugby, chess, music were Mick's social loves, and it is safe to say he enjoyed a pint or two sometimes even more.

His well attended funeral was held at Poole Crematorium, and the only room available was outside, such was his popularity, family, good friends, and workmates said goodbye to a true friend, colleague and Railway man. Mick was one of us.

So long mate, you went too early, which is something that was rarely said about you, God bless and rest easy.

**Paul Flanagan, Branch Chairman
Bournemouth**



Tyssul when he drove the Orient Express

JAMES 'TYSSUL' EVANS DROVE ORIENT EXPRESS

James 'Tyssul' Evans has died at the age of 83. He passed away just before Christmas last year. Tyssul was my close friend, a fantastic man who was a great story-teller. He had a story about everything, and was a member of the Railway Society in Ammanford, where, after 50 years on the railway, he spent his last years.

He was born in 1927 and wanted to go to sea. His father, however, told him he was going on the railways, and in those days a father's word was gospel. He took his Great Western Railway exam at the age of 14 and began work as a cleaner in Fishguard on 32 shillings a week. Two years later he became a fireman. After a period in Hereford, he returned to Fishguard where he passed out as a driver in 1955. For seven years at the end of steam he taught new drivers at Goodwick in Pembrokeshire and when that facility closed he moved to Didcot. It was here he began his association with the Orient Express, driving it from Reading to Stratford upon Avon.

Tyssul is survived by his daughter Ingrid, son-in-law Martin, four grand-children and six great-grandchildren.

Don Lawrence, Garnant

RAYMOND ('BONES') WESLEY

Sadly, Ray passed away on the 9th January 2011, at the age of 86, bringing to an end of a long line of Drivers who all started and retired at New England.

Wherever he went he was always ready to join in with messroom banter, along with any card game that was going. However, when he was driving he became a totally different person and would not speak to his mate for hours on end. He will always be remembered by his unusual pocket watch which was about 4 to 5 inches in diameter. His last few years were spent in a care home having become unable to look after himself.

Our sympathy goes out to his family at a time of their sad loss.

Don Bates, RMS retired member

MAURICE FOUNTAIN FROM FARM TO FOOTPLATE

BORN in 1936, Maurice's first job after leaving school was on a farm. He quickly discovered this was not the life for him, so he joined the railway at Stratford Loco, initially as a Cleaner. He was made up to Fireman in 1952.

Like many of that age group he served two years in the army before returning to

the railway. He was made up to driver at the age of 23. This was when he became a resident of Ilford Railway Hostel. Later when finances allowed he bought a flat at Leigh-on Sea and moved to Southend Depot. Maurice loved steam locomotives and as Marylebone was still working steam specials he moved there. He was also a

prolific traveller travelling on railways in America, Germany and Poland to name a few. He retired in the late 1990s, and passed away at his home in Leigh on Boxing Day last year at the age of 72.

May he RIP.

**Peter Smith, Reporter, ASLEF RMS
and KX**

Willesden men get together for Andy and Ron

IT was a genuine privilege to be part of the large group of friends that took the opportunity to toast the future of Andy Cutcliffe and Ron Hammond as they took early retirement from DBS.

There were retired drivers and many others who have left Wembley to further their careers in other TOC's and FOC's but seeing them laughing and joking was like a journey back to the old Stonebridge Park.

Andy and Ron's generosity was not only limited to the excellent food provided but certain liquid refreshment that

fuelled memories and reminiscences of the railways and friendships post pre and post privatisation.

Presentations were made on behalf of ASLEF and the Welfare Committee by District Organiser Mick Whelan who recognised the long contribution of two true railwaymen and the way they approached their careers with some further hilarity, it was nice to see him back amongst his own. Two great drivers and more importantly friends were celebrated for their careers, friendship, unity and loyalty that



Perry leads his retired members' class of 2011 out for a photo shoot

was both appropriate and sad as we wish them all the best for the future and look forward to seeing them socially whilst

wishing them a long and healthy retirement.

Tony Wells, Willesden Branch

Stratford – Ten years after closure

ON 29 January the Stratford Depot reunion was, as usual, warmly welcomed at the Railway Tavern. The excellent attendance at the event reflected the fact that it is ten years in July since the old Stratford Depot site closed.

While everybody enjoyed a pint and sampled the buffet, they were entertained by a slide show featuring the many changes to the Depot over the years and the various characters who had worked there. This prompted a multitude of comments such as, 'Isn't that Thingamabob from So-and-So' and 'Oh look! There's Whatshisname!'

We're very grateful to Andy Grimmett for producing the slide show. The evening concluded with a presentation of a 40-year ASLEF membership badge to Chris Daughters and a 50-year medallion to Terry Bowyer. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year.

P. Dodgson, Secretary, Stratford branch



Dodgson with Terry Bowyer (left) and Chris Daughters

Pay on the agenda means overflow meeting in Shrewsbury

THE January Shrewsbury Branch 'Disputes Special' meeting was extremely well attended. Present were Executive Committee member Dave Calfe, District Organiser Mick Whelan, The Arriva Trains Wales and London Midland Company Councils, members from Chester, Crewe, Cardiff, Birmingham New Street and Bletchley Branches, Drivers from Wrexham and Shropshire (also members of Chester Branch) and a significant proportion of Shrewsbury rank and file Branch members.

We were unable to contain everybody in our allocated room in 'The Loggerheads' and had to spread out into the corridor and three other rooms! Informal caucuses were held in the adjacent rooms for members wishing for supplementary information following specific reports from officers while the

official Branch meeting continued in the 'Gentlemen's Room' (not the toilet!)

EC member Dave Calfe and ATW Company Council rep Ian Duncan reported on Arriva Trains Wales industrial issues including the balloting of members and issues surrounding Sundays, while District Organiser Mick Whelan reported on London Midland issues including the ballot for industrial action and high court injunctions. The unilateral opinion of the branch was that London Midland had been dishonest and dishonourable in its words and actions and members were absolutely disgusted by the company's actions and propaganda.

Mick addressed ASLEF members from Wrexham & Shropshire, who visited our Branch following the announcement on 28th, that

operations would cease by their company. Mick spoke of his dismay about how the news was broken and the disregard by the parent organisations in regard to shock to our members; the company should have been much more tolerant of the needs of its workforce. He pledged that ASLEF would do all possible to look after the needs of its members. The branch unanimously passed a resolution in support for the affected members of ASLEF and indicated to our comrades our sympathy in their plight.

The Branch donated £100 to Shropshire and Telford Trades Council to provide 8 coaches for people to travel to London and take part in the TUC March for the Alternative to demonstrate against the CON-DEM cuts on 26 March 26 and a vote of thanks given to union officials and visitors attending.

The meeting ended up lasting for three hours and was followed by some extremely enjoyable social interaction- trains home were missed by a few people! Despite the terrible news about our colleagues on Wrexham & Shropshire and the ongoing disputes affecting Branch members on Arriva Trains Wales and London Midland, there was a positive aspect in that the meeting was a very comradely affair. Denationalisation and franchising has not, it would seem, dented the bonds that hold train drivers- members of ASLEF together. We would also like to thank The Loggerheads for accommodating us, providing rooms and sandwiches- all free of charge.

Alan Griffiths, Branch Chair and London Midland Company Council

Best wishes for Norwich Dave

The December meeting of the Norwich Branch was the Annual General Meeting where the branch elected its Chair, Secretary and other officials. The opportunity was also taken for DCC Secretary Steve Wright to present an inscribed ASLEF tankard and a certificate to Brother Dave Bales, who has been promoted to the retirement link!

Dave has served on the LDC for the past 16 years or so, mostly as chairman. He has also held various branch positions. He was a staunch servant of the union here at Norwich at local level, and his vast knowledge of rostering and local issues affecting ASLEF members will be a big loss. We all



Mick Whelan does the honours

wish Dave and his family a long and happy retirement and hope to see him at future branch meetings.

Paul Green, Secretary, Norwich branch

Arkwright visit for Leamington

The Leamington Spa Branch recently accepted an invitation to visit ASLEF Head Office at Arkwright Road which we were pleased to accept. It was good to see the old place before the move to new premises.

As shown in the photo, four of our finest made the trip to the big city.

We were made to feel very welcome and given a very entertaining and informative tour of the building where we received a very warm reception from all the ASLEF staff that we met. Many thanks from us all for a 'grand day out'!

You may also notice from the photo that I didn't attend - as obviously somebody's camera was working. Mine has a tendency to



LEAMINGTON'S FAB FOUR: left to right Phil Richmond, Clive Harrison, Phil Spice and Steve Day

flatten its batteries whenever it is required!

Nick Walker, Reporter, Leamington Spa Branch

Upcoming events

DIDCOT REUNION

The annual Didcot reunion will take place on Saturday 30 April at the Railway Staff Club in Didcot from noon. All active, retired and associates are welcome.

RETIRING HATFIELD

Dave Webber, Alan Williams and Keith Maeer will be retiring from the footplate in the near future and invite all friends and colleagues to join them on 13 May in Hatfield from noon to mark the occasion. The function will be held in the social club. To get there, cross the road from the station, turn left and it is a little way down on the right.

Fond farewell to cheery Gordon Hill

GORDON HILL had to leave the industry last year due to illness, after serving as a driver and member of ASLEF's Edinburgh No 2 branch for 32 years

Gordon started at Haymarket depot as a BR Traction trainee in August 1978. He continued at Haymarket until he

got a driving job in Glasgow's Bridgeton depot in 1984. Three years later he moved back to Edinburgh Waverley, which has become the depot because of Haymarket's move to Waverley Station.

He worked for the first shadow franchise which, funny enough, called 'East Coast'

until GNER got the franchise. Gordon then worked in turn for GNER, National Express and finally the nationalised East Coast.

He was always cheery, and his normal greeting to drivers coming into the Bothy was 'Would you like a cup of tea & a biscuit?' I'm sure Gordon won't mind me saying this quiet man was always proud of his membership of ASLEF. Good luck in your retirement, Gordon, from all the members of ASLEF Edinburgh No 2 - and welcome to our retired members' section.

Rab Wickstead, Secretary, Edinburgh No. 2



Gordon Hill (centre) is presented with an ASLEF Retirement Certificate and Commemorative Plate by retired members' section secretary Tony West and treasurer Alan Taylor

JAVELIN TO ASHFORD

Once again Alan Taylor and myself enjoyed a ride on the Javelin Service from St Pancras to Ashford to join 'round one' of the 2011 reunions, this one hosted by Ashford. There was a good turnout of retired members from all over the Southeastern. This year was an

improvement on last, when a heavy fall of snow reduced the numbers.

Unfortunately since then a few have fallen by the wayside. They will be missed but not forgotten - but as they say 'the show must go on'.

Once again Perry Calvert, Ashford Branch Secretary and Company

Councillor, turned up to give his support.

So once again I must congratulate the organisers for a fine event and the staff of the BRSA for their hospitality. So dates for your diary: Round Two - Ramsgate 7 April 7. Round three - Tonbridge 7 July 7. Round Four - Rainham 6 October.

Peter Smith, Reporter, RMS



These are the pages where you talk to us. We welcome your letters, either by mail to the **ASLEF Journal at 9 Arkwright Road London NW3 6AB** or by email to **journal@aslef.org.uk**. Because of our space constraints, please try to keep your contributions as short as you can. This month we continue our **STAR LETTER feature**. The immensely lucky winner will pocket a rich range of ASLEF regalia!



If you work for FLHH, are you assured?

I AM writing this letter in the hope that it will encourage drivers at Freightliner Heavy Haul to join the driver assurance scheme.

I was part of the business council team that negotiated the scheme over 3 years ago. Although there has been a decent take up, it still amazes me that not all the drivers have joined. FLHH drivers are all eligible..

We are talking about the princely sum of £65 a year. That's £1.25 per week. You can't buy a half pint of beer for that. And in exchange you get the assurance (hence the name) that if the worst were to happen and you could no longer retain your employment with FLHH because of illness or injury - then you will benefit from the scheme. How much will depend on how much is in the scheme and how long you have contributed to it. I'm sure it would be well worth whatever you've paid in.

Also for every pound we put into the scheme, FLHH pay the same. This means the more people who contribute, the more we can rely on if and when the time comes.

The other great thing is that the scheme is run totally by its members. It's not managed by some insurance company that wouldn't pay out unless you were on death's door.

I know many of you think, 'Oh, it won't happen to me', but I, for one, am not prepared to take the chance. I joined the scheme immediately. Since then I've had the misfortune to see a couple of colleagues fall by the way side. Although I hope it doesn't happen again, I'm afraid it probably will.

So come on, guys! We fought long and hard to get something that would benefit all our drivers - so take up the option and look after your own, and your families', interests.

Daz Morgan, Driver, FLHH

Thanks for support

I WOULD like to thank all those who voted in the recent election for the First Great Western HSS DDC rep for the Bristol/Swansea/Paddington constituency - and a special 'thank you' to the members who voted for me. ASLEF is once again fully represented on our DDC, which is as it should be.

We face some potentially challenging times

WHAT HAPPENED TO MECHANICAL TESTS?

I AM dismayed to learn that the element for testing the mechanical aptitudes of prospective train drivers has been removed from the selection process.

One would have thought that a rudimentary knowledge of what happens to cog 'E' if one turns cog 'A', or what happens to wire 'X' if one energises wire 'Y', or what to expect when pushing a lever against a fulcrum, the effects of wind resistance, gravity, friction... would have been an essential quality in a train driver bearing in mind

that a third of the training course is dedicated to technical knowledge and that a significant part of our duties require us to assess, report and act on faults and failures.

Perhaps you could tell us how and why this decision has come to and for whose benefit.

It seems to me we now have one less argument to justify train drivers' current rates of pay.

Kevin Peat, First Great Western, Exeter West Depot

over the next few years, and it is important that we as drivers remember the ASLEF motto: 'Unity is strength' is never more appropriate than now.

Andy Castle, Driver, Bristol HSS

Proddy pitfalls

I'D LIKE to make Journal readers aware of the pitfalls of productivity deals they may be asked to consider at their relevant TOC.

In October 2009 drivers at Northern Rail (West) voted to accept a new productivity deal.

A major concession granted to the company was the creation of 'super links'. This reduced the number of links at various depots allowing the size of the links to

increase. This required a large amount of training for drivers so they sign most or all routes and traction at their depot.

Unfortunately when implementing the deal, the company engineered a situation where

ASLEF could not sanction rest days, as to do so would see rest days at only three depots!

Very little training has since taken place, and we now have a situation where a small percentage of drivers carry the burden of the depots workload and the company manage

to cover the jobs by utilising the new flexibility it gained under the terms of the productivity deal - but without the cost of rest

days to cover diagrams or being used for training purposes.

This is causing frustration amongst drivers - with some failing to realise that the blame lies totally at the company's door. Instead they point the finger at drivers regularly sat spare due to a lack of route or traction knowledge.

ASLEF's hands also seem to be tied as the company is just using the flexibility it gained without considering the impact its greedy conduct is having on drivers.

I supported the deal at the time, but now I regret having done so. I just hope lessons have been learned.

Steve Hill, Driver, Newton Heath Branch

March on the old Etonians!

I RECENTLY attended a march and rally in Carlisle where several hundred of us demonstrated our united opposition to the ConDem government cuts. Two things struck me after speaking to others on the march.

Firstly, there was a growing feeling of anger across many different parts of our community towards the government's deep cutbacks. And secondly, the previous government will not be forgiven for bailing out the rotten banking system to the tune of £800 billion. This basically bankrupted the public purse - and gave the excuse for the programme of cuts.

I urge all ASLEF members, along with their

friends and families, to show support for public services by rallying against the class-driven cutbacks, either by supporting actions in your own communities, or by joining the massive TUC march and demo planned in London on 26 March.

There won't be a union member left untouched by this wretched government, whether that be the local council axing or reducing its services, or through the VAT increase - so please show solidarity. We have a Cabinet full of old Etonians and millionaires who don't give a damn about ordinary working families.

John Metcalfe, Carlisle Branch

Why no Labour support for strike law change?

I HAVE to agree with Brother Jim North's letter in the December 2010 journal ('What's the Difference?') regarding the Labour Party's indifference to the workers.

If Labour were so supportive of the workers, why did only a paltry 82 out of 255 Labour MPs vote in favour of the Lawful Industrial Action (Minor Errors) Bill? This was the only piece of progressive legislation put forward in a sea of anti-union, anti-worker proposals.

And why did Ed Miliband fail to support this Bill which would prevent management from seeking legal action to overturn majority ballots based on technical errors? Does he not remember how the BAA ballot was quashed

OPPOSITE POWERS

I READ with interest Brother Powers' views on 'fairness and discrimination' as regards doing voluntary overtime in the February Journal.

I was a fireman for fourteen years before I got my driver's check. If the

drivers in my day had worked all the hours under the sun, it would have taken much longer than that. I have to say the phrase, 'I'm alright Jack' springs to mind!

Ron Kettle, Retired Member

by the courts, based on the minor technicality of the union failing to inform its members of a dozen invalid ballots, despite 90% of the workers voting for industrial action? Or the ASLEF ballot in London Midland which was overturned because of three questionable votes?

Perhaps the Journal could seek an interview with Mr Miliband and ask him directly why he - and the majority of his party - allowed this Bill to fail? Instead they supported the current legislation that seeks only to frustrate workers' right to strike.

Craig Marshall, Gidea Park

Thompsons can help

ANTHONY DOBSON's letter Fatality Compensation (ASLEF Journal February 2011) about advice given to him by Thompsons following a fatality in January 2010 needs clarification.

Under the terms of the CICA scheme there is no need for an applicant to have been off work for a period of 6 weeks or more. However, they do have to be able to show that they have suffered a disabling injury (either physical or psychological) for a period of 6 weeks or more and that they have sought medical advice for these injuries in order to qualify for an award at the lowest tariff level of the scheme (an award of £1,000).

Further, under the terms of the CICA Scheme, the individual has two years from the date of the incident in which to submit an application for compensation.

Mr Dobson advised that the incident occurred on 16 January 2010 and therefore he still has time to submit an application to the CICA. There are more details on the CICA's website (www.cica.gov.uk) but Thompsons would be happy to assist with an application if he wishes to proceed.

Thompsons Solicitors

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

To advertise in the ASLEF Journal please contact Sarah Francis on 020 7317 8600 or sfrancis@aslef.org.uk



GREAT WESTERN CLASS 57 Night Riviera Sleeper badges, individually numbered, only 100 made. High quality engraved enamel. £6 each plus £1 p&p. Email intercityexpress125@hotmail.co.uk or call 07930-419850

ASLEF TRAIN DRIVER collects ASLEF/railway badges, signs, shed plates, signalling items, etc. Phone Mark on 01562 746537 or (mobile) 07789301551

DRIVER COLLECTS BR33056 SERIES TRAINCREW / DRIVER MANUALS. Contact Lee on 07919127972 or e-mail lippydavies@blueyonder.co.uk



FAVERSHAM BRANCH (077) has finally launched its 25th Anniversary ASLEF/NUM badge. They cost £10 each including P&P. A few Faversham Branch Centenary badges remain available at £5 each including P&P. To order please contact the Branch Secretary, Steve Gurdler, 18 Hunters Way West, Chatham, Kent ME5 7HL. steve.gurdler@aslefonline.co.uk or 07941 110473



FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES and FOOTBALL BADGES bought by collector. Please call or email with any pre-1965 programmes or other early football memorabilia. Martin Scott 07718 131622 Email: scottfootball@hotmail.com



INTERCITY DRIVER BASEBALL CAPS, navy blue embroidered, only 50 made, adjustable velcro strap on reverse. £8.50 each plus £1.50 p&p. Email intercityexpress125@hotmail.co.uk or call 07930-419850 for payment details.



CITY OF LONDON BADGES, one 10-year and one depot badge. Depot badges are numbered 1-150. There are only 150 of each. Price £5 plus £1 p&p. All profits to City of London branch funds to acquire a branch banner.

Further information or orders to Colin Dawson 01689 849 543 or 22 Hutchison Road, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey CR0 0BD.



NXEA 2009 STRIKE BADGE commemorating solidarity of ASLEF members. Purchase (£3 plus p&p) from NXEA Branch Secretary or District Council 5 Secretary. Contact M Steele on 07788 153954, 1 Rosecroft, South Wootton, Kings Lynn Norfolk PE30 3WX. Proceeds to District Council 5 Education Fund and ASLEF Fighting Fund.



FIRST EDITION of the only recognised Tram/Light Rail ASLEF Branch. **CROYDON TRAM/LIGHT RAIL No1 (270)** Badge cost £5 each with £1 P&P. Cheques payable to: "CTLRNo1" and sent to David Brinkworth, 6 Peregrine Court, 47 Albemarle Road, Beckenham, BR3 5HL or via Paypal david@brinkworth.me.uk

ASLEF challenges all white Scots Parliament

Says Paul Patmore, Representative Committee member, District 2, who was Vice Chair of the Scottish Trades Union Congress Black Workers Conference ...

A SLEF were among the 12 unions represented at the 14th annual STUC Black Workers' Conference in Glasgow last October. Aamer Anwar, a human rights lawyer, explaining that 'Scotland United Against Racism' was set

up to oppose the English and Scottish Defence Leagues and the BNP, called on all trade unionists to actively oppose these groups.

Georgina Wardrop, Chairperson to the STUC Youth Committee spoke on the economic

recession and the effects it is having on young people looking for work. While other speakers raised human trafficking in Scotland, the use (and abuse) of the Mental Health Act and the 'Show Racism the Red Card' campaign. ASLEF backed all the

motion on the agenda including a Unite call to work and campaign with organisations in the black, Asian and ethnic communities supporting women who suffer from domestic and state violence.

The civil servants' PCS union called on the committee to map black members' networks within all affiliates, insisting that the networks are at the forefront of opposition to the neo-fascist organisations.

I moved ASLEF motion on the lack of diversity in the Scottish Parliament. Pointing out that not a single one of the 129 MSPs comes from a black or minority ethnic background, I urged a lobby of all major political parties to improve diversity and the creation of a campaign with Operation Black Vote to increase the involvement of BME communities in the Scottish political field.



Scots to the Left

Scottish Labour's 2010 conference in Oban took place against the background of a lost General Election, but at least in Scotland we bucked the national trend. An increased percentage vote saw increased majorities in marginal seats and re-gaining Glasgow East and Dunfermline West. In fact only a single Tory was returned north of the border, along with 11 very worried Scottish Lib Dem MPs.

The conference proved to be a productive and motivating experience for the party as we approach this year's Scottish Parliament elections. Scottish leader Iain Gray set out what Labour will do if we win the May election including creating a National Care Service and recruiting 'an army' of teachers in a drive to eradicate illiteracy in Scotland.

Scottish Labour's commitment to reinstating the Glasgow Airport Rail Link has been well documented and ASLEF welcomed the launch of the Living Wage campaign. Iain Gray said, 'Labour will introduce a living wage of at least £7.15 per hour in the whole of the public sector, including councils. And then we will use procurement contracts to ensure private sector suppliers are living wage employers too.'

Ed Miliband addressed the Scottish Conference for the first time as party Leader, dismissing Cameron's 'Big Society' as a big fig-leaf for the old pessimistic idea that people 'do better on their own'.

It was an enjoyable and productive week in fine company, and was rounded off with the election of Kevin Lindsay to Labour's Scottish Executive Committee.

Alan Moir of Polmadie Branch

With Alan on ASLEF's delegation were 'the ever youthful' Rab Wickstead (Edinburgh No 2), Kevin Lindsay (Scottish Organiser) and political officer, James McGowan.



None of the 129 MSPs comes from a black or minority ethnic background

East of England is organising a Labour fightback

THE East of England Labour conference in Southend began on an optimistic note with the town's deputy mayor, David Norman, saying there had been a 30% increase in new young members since the General Election. I couldn't help but notice, however, that only seven ethnic minority delegates attended the weekend conference.

We discussed in workshops how to welcome new members at meetings and involve them from the start rather than leaving them at the back of the room wondering what is going on!

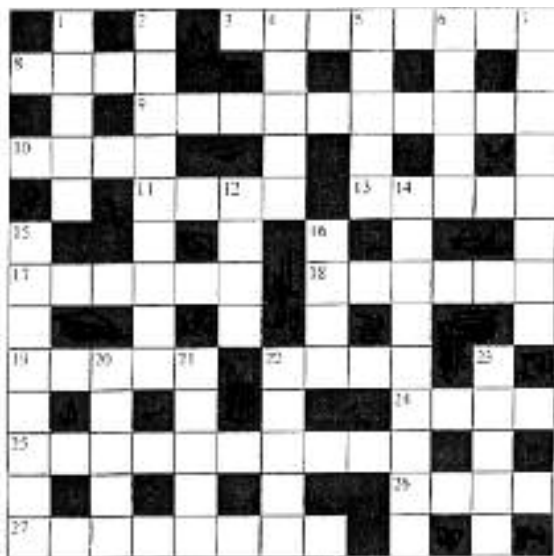
Councillors Sharon Taylor of Stevenage and John Kent of Thurrock Council spoke about campaigning at local government level to get back into power nationally, and how to expose the Lib Dems for their hypocrisy and the double standards they have shown since joining the government. For example, they vote against cuts in local government but for them in the coalition government! They stressed that in 1945 the deficit was eight times more than today, but the then Labour government successfully spent, rather than cut, its way out of the crisis.

Labour's Deputy Leader Harriet Harman condemned the Lib Dems for promising to cut tuition fees – and then voting to treble them, promising 3,000 more police – and voting to cut them, and promising not to increase VAT – and voting to do so. Harriet said that in the May elections we have to target Lib Dem supporters who may vote for us now, having been betrayed by their party.

All in all it was an encouraging, useful and practical three days and, Mark Steele and Nick Brown (both Kings Lynn) and Wendy Hurst (Kings Cross), I was proud to represent ASLEF at the gathering.

Floyd Doyle, Chair of the ASLEF Black and Ethnic Minority Representative Committee

Prize Crossword No. 59 set by TLC



CLUES ACROSS

- 3 Lincolnshire town (8)
 8 Item of footwear (4)
 9 Shrove Tuesday (7,3)
 10 ---- and the King of Siam (4)
 11 Steel bar laid on the ground as part of a railway track (4)
 13 Type of resin obtained from certain tropical trees (5)
 17 Tax or duty to be paid on some imports (6)
 18 Disappear (6)
 19 Music in a slow tempo (5)
 22 Release, unfasten (4)
 24 Approaching (4)

- 25 County town of Wiltshire (10)
 26 Public commotion (4)
 27 Travelling effortlessly to the seaside! (8)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Move wagon to another place (5)
 2 Leaving the station (9)
 4 In the area (5)
 5 Part of the foot (5)
 6 Bill ----, expert on country matters (5)
 7 Sun-up (8)
 12 Information, - in short (4)
 14 Residents of the capital (9)

- 15 Physically strong and fit (8)
 16 Level (4)
 20 Spanish wine (5)
 21 The repeated course of a celestial object (5)
 22 ASLEF is a fine example of one! (5)
 23 Railway vehicle (5)



MARKS & SPENCER

The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

Solution to Crossword No 58 which appeared in the February edition of the ASLEF Journal. Congratulations to **Len Sidebotham** from **Birmingham**

ACROSS 1 Hawaii 5 Cable car 9 Good Idea 10 Pliant 11 Encroach 12 Gaffer 13 Acrimony 15 Aden 17 Arid 19 Adjusted 20 Ideals 21 Criminal 22 Geezer 23 Inkwells 24 Deletion 25 Rascal **DOWN** 2 Anointed 3 Alderman 4 Indian red 5 Clapham Common 6 Lullaby 7 Chauffer 8 Returned 14 Nitpicker 15 Abridged 16 Ethereal 17 Admirers 18 Ismailia 19 Ailment

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Thanks for all your responses to the 57th ASLEF crossword in the February edition. If you complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB by the 14th of the issue month.

ASLEF'S legal services – your rights for their wrongs!

FREE LEGAL ADVICE ASLEF also provides first class free legal advice – both for members and for their dependents. During 2009 ASLEF recovered £1,946,190.45 in damages for all types of cases. Call the helpline on 0808 100 8009

EMERGENCIES If you are an ASLEF member who is arrested or being interviewed by the police and need legal assistance – day or night – you can call the members' Emergency Hotline on 0800 587 7530.

SACKINGS OR OTHER PROBLEMS AT WORK Harassment, discrimination or bullying? If your local, branch or district representative is unavailable, call the Industrial Relations department at union headquarters (020 7317 8600) or email info@aslef.org.uk

Changed your Address?

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

Branch.....

Membership No.....

Please return coupon to: 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB

More than just a union

T THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS

Genuine Harris Tweed Jacket

Special Offer

£165



A man with short, light brown hair is smiling at the camera. He is wearing a light-colored, patterned shirt, a bright yellow tie, and a brown tweed jacket. He is standing in a field of purple heather. In the background, there are green hills and a large, dark tree. The sky is bright and hazy. The text "Autumn Heath" is visible in the top right corner.

Fern Check

Green Herringbone

Slate Check

Rust

Autumn Heath

Blue Herringbone

Bronze Check

- 100% Wool Handwoven in the Outer Hebrides
- Single breasted • Double vent
- 2 Button front • Chest sizes up to 56"
- Short, Regular and Long fittings
- Dry clean friendly 'football' buttons
- 2 Front Pockets • 3 Inside pockets
- Handkerchief pocket
- Luxurious satin lining
- Fern Check, Green Herringbone, Slate Check, Rust, Autumn Heath, Blue Herringbone, Bronze Check

Peter Christian

Men's Apparel & Accessories' Catalogue Award Winner 2010

Order Now QUOTE 15Y06

01273 493 393

open 8am-10pm 7 days a week

www.peterchristian.co.uk/bty

Free return service and money back guaranteed if not delighted

Order by phone **quoting 15/Y/06** or please send your coupon & payment to:
Peter Christian, 25 Mackley Estate, Henfield Road, Small Dole, West Sussex, BN5 9XR

Please send me	Code	Chest	Fitting	Colour	Qty	Total
Harris Tweed Jacket	MJ15					
Harris Tweed Jacket	MJ15					
Colours: Fern Check, Green Herringbone, Slate Check, Rust, Autumn Heath, Blue Herringbone, Bronze Check					p&p	£5.00
Chest: 36 38 40 42 44 46 48 50 52 54 56 Short, Regular and Long fittings					Total	

I enclose a cheque made out to Peter Christian for £
or please charge my credit/debit card.

Card No.

Card Type

[illegible]Valid
From

--	--	--	--

Expiry
Date

--	--	--	--

Maestro
Issue No

3 Digit
Security No

3 Digit
Security No

--	--	--

Please ☐ 1 jacket for £165 + £5 p&p = £170
send me ☐ 2 jackets for £330 + £5 p&p = £335

Name

Address

Tel

E-mail

Please allow up to 14 days for delivery. If you do not wish us to pass your details on to other companies please tick the box ☐ A Division of Hills of Bramley Ltd Co Reg No 04767802